

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /112 W

----- 102972

R 151000E JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2870

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: NWFP BYE-ELECTIONS

THE FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMERICAN CONSUL, PESHAWAR:

1. NWFP BYE-ELECTIONS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 8 HAVE BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL JANUARY 17. GOVERNMENT SO RCES IN PESHAWAR HAVE READILY ADMITTED THAT WHILE L CTION COMMISSION'S DECI\*ION MADE WITH AVOWED AIM OF PREVENTING THREE ELECTIONS FROM TAKING PLACE ONLY TWO DAYS AFTER EID-UL-AZHA HILIDAY, ACTUAL PURPOSE WAS TO GIVE GOVERNMENT ADDITIONAL TIME TO BEEF UP ITS LACKLUSTER ELECTION CAM-PAIGNS IN CHARSADDA AND MARDAN CONSTITUENCIES AND TRY OBTAIN VICTORY FOR AT LEAST ONE OF GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES AGAINST FAVORED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY. DECISION OBVIOUSLY SENSIBLE ONE FROM GOVERNMENT'S POINT OF VIEW BECAUSE SUCH IMPORTANT VETERAN CAMPAIGNERS AS CENTRAL MINISTERS SHERPAO AND QAIYUM WERE FOR VARIETY REASONS UNABLE TO ELECTIONEER ON BEHALF GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES IN DECEMBER.

2. DURING PAST TEN DAYS BOTH SHERPAO AND QAIYUM AS WELL AS NWFP GOVERNOR ASLAM KHATTAK AND SEVERAL PROVINCIAL  
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MINISTERS HAVE TRIED TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME WITH SATURATION CAMPAIGN OF SPEECHMAKING IN BOTH CONSTITUENCIES. ALL SPEAKERS HAVE PUT PARTICULAR STRESS ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BHUTTO GOVERNMENT AND HAVE ATTEMPTED WIN SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT WITH PROMISES OF FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES AND USUAL CASTIGATION OF NAP AS PARTY OF TREASON AND VIOLENCE. (ASLAM KHATTAK ALLEGED JANUARY 3 THAT GOVERNMENT AWARE OF PLOT BY ELEMENTS "INSIDE AND OUTSIDE COUNTRY" TO CARRY OUT ASSASSINATIONS OF IMPORTANT POLITICAL LEADERS IN PROVINCE.) DESPITE GOVERNMENT'S LAST MINUTE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS ELECTORAL POSITION IN TWO RACES, CONSENSUS IN PESHAWAR IS THAT BOTH NAP CANDIDATES WILL WIN ELECTIONS IF THEY ARE FAIR.

IN KARAK TEHSIL ELECTION IN KAHAT DISTRICT, INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE HABIBULLAH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE VERY GOOD CHANCE OF DEFEATING MOHSIN ALI KHAN IN FAIR ELECTION. HABIBULLAH HAS PROVEN TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNER AND HAS REPORTEDLY SPENT LACS OF RUPEES IN EFFORT DEFEAT SON-IN-LAW OF HIS BROTHER ASLAM KHATTAK. HITTING HARD ON THEME THAT MOHSIN IS NON-KHATTAK AND NON-PATHAN, HABIBULLAH HAS WON CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY FROM SUPPORTERS OF OTHER CANDIDATES WITH HIS CONSTANT ASSERTION THAT HE DOES NOT CARE WHETHER VOTERS CAST BALLOTS FOR HIM OR FOR ANY OTHER KHATTAK TRIBAL CANDIDATE AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT VOTE FOR MOHSIN. AS FORMER LEADING MILITARY FIGURE HABIBULLAH EXPECTED WIN LARGE SHARE OF EX-SOLDIER VOTE IN AREA WHICH PROVIDES MANY OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN TO PAKISTAN ARMY. HE ALSO HAS CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH AMONG INDUSTRIAL WORKERS WHO RESIDE IN KARAK CONSTITUENCY BUT WHO WORK IN HIS TEXTILE FACTORY IN KOHAT CITY OR IN HIS WOOLEN MILL IN BANNU. WHILE NAP IS OFFICIALLY SUPPORTING NAP/JUI CANDIDATE GUL RAHMAN, THERE ARE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT NAP LEADERSHIP HAS PASSED WORD TO FOLLOWERS IN KARAK THAT PARTY HAS NO OBJECTIONS IF THEY WISH VOTE FOR HABIBULLAH. WHILE NAP LEADERS FULLY EXPECT HABIBULLAH TO BECOME SUPPORTER OF BHUTTO GOVERNMENT IF ELECTED, THEY WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE HIM DEAL BODY BLOW TO ASLAM KHATTAK'S POLITICAL CAREER. BYROADE

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ELECTION CANDIDATES, PARTY ELECTIONS, PARTY LEADERS, POLITICAL PARTIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 15 JAN 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974ISLAMA00479  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** n/a  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** ISLAMABAD  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740169/aaaagwvr.tel  
**Line Count:** 103  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 22 AUG 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <22 AUG 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <03-Sep-2002 by MorefiRH>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971020  
**Subject:** NWFP BYE-ELECTIONS  
**TAGS:** PINT, PK, NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY  
**To:** STATE INFO KARACHI  
LAHORE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005